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CAMBODIAN KING'S ABDICATION

- I. In Wednesday's sudden abdication, Cambodian king Norodom has repeated--on a more positive scale--a tactic he used with success in past to get his way in face of French opposition.
 - A. In 1953, after blasting French policy (during visit to New York), he refused to return to his capital until French met his demands.
- II. Norodom's present gripe is with both foreign and domestic criticism of his plans for constitutional reform.
 - A. Wants to replace elections (scheduled for April) with special referendum.
 1. This would decide whether or not constitution would be drastically

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2. Revision would virtually eliminate Cambodian political parties, which have been exhibiting considerable republican sentiment.

B. King conceives his program as a device to meet both demands of democracy and Cambodian desire for paternalistic monarchy.

C. King's particular annoyance is International Control Commission's concern with what he conceives to be purely domestic affairs.

1. Canadians, Indians, as well as British have charged his plan not compatible with Geneva agreement which called for elections in 1955 under constitution then in force.

III. Norodom is thoroughly sincere and also highly sensitive to criticism.

A. Chosen for his job in 1941 by council of regents because he was related to both of two rival branches of royal family.

SECRET

C. After finally standing up to French, he won for Cambodia a considerable measure of real independence.

D. Abdication in favor of his father, Prince Suramarit, is irregular since Cambodian practice is for monarchs to be chosen by council of regents.

1. Suramarit, never king, has had no active part in government for years past.

IV. Doubtful that Norodom intends to drop out of political scene for good.

A. But Cambodian stability bound to suffer by his precipitate act.